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Montana State Historical Records Advisory Board

The Montana Archivist

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SHRAB MEETING HELD IN HAVRE

The Montana State Historical Records Advisory Board met Thursday, October 24, 2002, at 1:30 pm in Havre, Montana. Members present were: Jodi Allison-Bunnell, Ellen Crain, Anne Foster, Molly Miller, State Coordinator, Peggy Gow, and Judy Ellinghausen, Great Falls. Kim Allen Scott, Bozeman, was excused.

Following the introduction of the new member and guests, Anne Foster tendered her resignation. Anne announced that she has taken a position at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, effective mid-December. She will submit a written letter of resignation. The SHRAB went on to discuss replacements for Anne. Anne recommended Jolene Crebs, who is working to establish a tribal archives at Stone Child College, as a potential member.

Molly Miller then reported on the status of the SHRAB administrative grant that was submitted to NHPRC in later September. The grant contained a request for funding for travel expenses for board members, printing the quarterly newsletter, posting the newsletter on the web, printing a pamphlet, reprinting the SHRAB strategic plan, revising and printing 100 copies of the self-assessment manual, and a workshop. Molly will inform board members if funding is received by the end of November.

Jodi Allison-Bunnell then reported on Preservation Assessment Grants available from NEH. These assessment grants are available for up to $5,000; require no match, and little administration. She proposed writing the grant to have the self-assessment manual revised and printed for distribution. This grant is due in May.

Molly Miller reported on the National Forum on Archival Continuing Education (NFACE) and the Web Needs Assessment Project final reports that were submitted by COSHRC.

The first item up for discussion was the election of a Deputy State Coordinator. Molly commented on the need to have a deputy coordinator who was not on the staff of the same institution as the State Coordinator. The deputy would serve as a back up if the state coordinator could not attend a meeting. The deputy would also be in charge of collecting evaluations for grant proposals submitted to NHPRC, if the State Coordinator could not collect them. A motion was made to appoint Jody Allison-Bunnell as deputy

(cont. page 5)

GRANTS AWARDED: NORTHWEST DIGITAL ARCHIVES AND NORTHWEST ARCHIVES PROCESSING INITIATIVE

Repositories across the Northwest have received grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Historic Publications and Records Commission to improve metadata and access to collection information in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana.

The NEH awarded a thirteen-member consortium $350,000 to build a database of 2,200 EAD-encoded finding aids by June 2004. Participating institutions in the Northwest Digital Archives (NWDA) project are the University of Montana, the Montana Historical Society, the University of Idaho, Oregon Historical Society, Oregon State University, University of Oregon, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies (Western Washington University), Pacific Lutheran University, Seattle Municipal Archives, University of Washington, Washington State Archives, Washington State University, and Whitworth College. The project website can be found at http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/holland/masc/nwda/nwda.html *(cont. page 2)*

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GRANTS *(cont.)*

The NHPRC awarded a six-member consortium $517,000 to process 880 collections, create 615 new finding aids, and improve finding aids for 265 collections. New or improved finding aids will be created as EAD documents and added to the NWDA database. Consortium members for the Northwest Archives Processing Initiative are the University of Montana, Oregon Historical Society, the Montana Historical Society, and the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies at Western Washington University, Whitworth College, and Pacific Lutheran University.

Both projects will vastly improve bibliographic access to collections across the Northwest that contain information on agriculture, forest products, fisheries and natural resources; urban and rural social and progressive movements; local, state, regional, and national politics; outdoor recreation; Native American language and culture; and the place of religious communities in the region.

UM COLLECTIONS ON THE MOVE

The University of Montana Archives and Special Collections has nearly completed its move into a new facility. Since 1975, the department has been housed in the traditional Archives location of the library's sub-basement, but now it will be located on the library's fourth floor. For visitors to the department, this means a quiet and pleasant reading room in which to work, spacious new display cases, and a space in which to attend seminars and receptions. For the materials, it means growth space in storage areas, a clean and uncarpeted floor, and a state-of-the-art fire protection system. And for the Archives and Special Collections staff, it means all this plus windows in the workroom and offices!

The University of Montana Archives is located in the Mansfield Library on the University of Montana Campus and is open to the public from 9am to 8pm Monday through Thursday, 9am to 5pm Friday, and 1pm to 5pm Saturday. Information on the Archives can be accessed by calling 243-2053 or visiting their web page at www.lib.umt.edu/arch/arch.htm.

MONTANA UNION CATALOG PROJECT CONTINUES

As part of the Montana Union Catalog Project with the National Union Catalog Manuscript Collections, the K. Ross Toole Archives has submitted 159 manuscript and 321 oral history records. The NUCMC staff has completed a total of 2,025 full records for Montana repositories.

Participants include the Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives, the Catholic Diocese of Great Falls—Billings, the Montana Historical Society, Montana State University—Bozeman, the Museum of Women's History, the Musselshell Valley Historical Museum, and the Tobacco Valley Board of History.

NEW APPOINTMENTS / RE-APPOINTMENTS TO SHRAB

In October of this year, Governor Judy Martz reappointed 7 of the members of the Montana SHRAB to their positions on the board. These members include, Jodi Allison Bunnell of the University of Montana, Kim Scott of Montana State University, Ellen Crain of the Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives, Anne Foster formerly of the Huntley Museum of Irrigated Agriculture, Lo[illegible] Morrow and Molly Miller of the Montana Historical Society, and Judy Ellinghausen of the Cascade County Historical Society.

In addition, Peggy Gow of the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Park in Deer Lodge, was appointed as a new member. Ms Gow has worked at the Grant Kohrs Ranch National Park since 1990, where she cares for artifacts and documents. As part of her work, she processed and cataloged the Conrad K. Waren Papers, which are now available for research. Ms Gow graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Anthropology.

If you would like to know more about the SHRAB or to speak with one the board members, please contact Molly Miller at 444-7482 for contact information.

IF YOU HAVE an article or announcement you would like to include in the next *Montana Archivist*, please contact Molly Miller at 444-7482 or momiller@state.mt.us.

CONNECTING THE ARCHIVAL COMMUNITY:

Report of the archival Education and information Web Needs Assessment Project

Prepared by Victoria Irons Walch, Project Coordinator

Background

The Archival Education and Information Web Needs Assessment project has its roots in the Action Agenda developed at the National Forum on Archival Continuing Education (NFACE), held in April 2000. The 120 NFACE participants developed an Action Agenda designed to guide all of the organizations, individually and collectively, as they continue to work to improve the accessibility, content, and quality of education and information services for the historical records community. Among the top priorities in the NFACE Action Agenda were the creation of a nationwide clearinghouse of information to support the development, delivery, and accessibility of archival continuing education, and the pursuit of partnerships, collaboration, and regular communication among professional archival organizations and with organizations serving allied professions. *Connecting the Archival Community* is the final report of 16 months of research and analysis on how to address these priorities.

Findings

The findings of the project's Working Group all come down to **the need for connections**. Individual archivists want to **connect to the Internet** in order to retrieve information and locate educational opportunities. They also rely on **connections with colleagues**—at conferences, by email, on listservs, in person—to answer questions and solve problems. Professional associations play a key role in archival work by facilitating these connections, but **archival associations themselves need to be better connected** to maximize use of scarce resources, enhance services to their members, and ultimately, help everyone in the field work cooperatively to improve the care of historical records.

A remarkable variety of Web-based resources exist to help archivists improve their knowledge and skills. Some are products of individual initiative while others are services provided by a range of organizations including professional associations, repositories, universities, government agencies, and foundations. The variety of providers presents a number of problems:

- Users express great **frustration because resources are scattered all over the Web** and there is no one point of entry.
- There is **not enough connectivity among archival websites**.
- Some of the most useful tools are products of individual initiative with **no guarantee of long-term institutional support**. They could easily disappear.
- Resource providers devote insufficient attention to promoting their sites so that **many users remain unaware of what is available**.
- It can be **difficult to identify which sources of information are most trustworthy**, especially for newcomers to the field.
- Website developers need to pay more attention to best practices for **usability and accessibility**.

At the outset of the project, the Working Group assumed that it would emerge with a plan for a single portal that could provide a central clearinghouse for archival resources on the Internet. However, it became clear early on that no one archival organization was capable of sustaining such a portal on its own and that archival organizations, collectively, were not yet ready to work together on such a substantial cooperative project.

It is easy to enumerate the virtues of collaboration—resource sharing, cost savings, the altruism of the "greater good"-- but much harder to implement and sustain a collaborative project. The report presents expert advice from inside the archival profession as well as from sociologists and business strategists to illustrate **what archivists must do to prepare themselves and their organizations for collaborative efforts** now and in the future.

The report **focuses on the roles of the 63 archival professional associations in the U.S.** because earlier COSHRC surveys have established that archivists rely heavily on these associations for assistance and contacts. The report **also touches on the roles of the State Historical Records Advisory Boards** especially as they work with associations in their states and regions to reach out to novice practitioners and community-based organizations. *(cont. page 4)*

Of course, universities and archival repositories, among others, also have critical roles to play in the delivery of education and information resources to archivists and should be engaged as the report's recommendations are addressed.

Recommendations

One of the top priorities to emerge from the project is the need **to improve communications among all archival professional associations** in the U.S. Better communications should improve understanding of operations and goals within and among the associations and will make it easier to find partners with similar visions and purposes. Specific recommendations to improve communications include:

•Establish a listserv for leaders of regional, state, and local archival associations.

•Establish an easily updatable contact list for all national, regional, state, and local archival associations.

•Establish an Archival Association Roundtable (or another appropriate type of subgroup) within SAA to encourage representatives from all archival associations to meet in person at least once a year.

•Compile a descriptive directory of all archival associations that would include information about basic operations, who they serve, and what information resources they develop and deliver.

•Test the value of regular electronic newsletters targeted at those who perform similar functions within these associations, e.g., webmasters, education coordinators.

•Look for ways to provide ongoing staff support to facilitate inter-association communication and cooperation.

The Working Group suggests that archivists **take a modular approach to the development of an information clearinghouse** starting with a common calendar of archival events and educational programs. It could be compiled and maintained though a joint effort of the national, regional, state, and local archival professional associations, the SHRABs, and university-based archival education programs. Other modules to consider include a database of archival standards and guidelines, a faculty directory and speakers' bureau, and collections of promotional and public awareness materials for events like Archives Week. Having a specific, narrowly focused project will give the cooperating organizations a chance to test their ability to work together while limiting the initial investment of resources. They will be able to identify both benefits and challenges before attempting a larger project.

While there are many possibilities for developing new resources, the Working Group also believes it will be beneficial to **make existing resources better known, improve their accessibility, and ensure their continued availability.** Toward these ends, we would encourage the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to expand the already strong collection of information resources now available through ALIC online and promote awareness about the availability of these resources. We also hope that all associations will increase the availability of their newsletters and journals online. In addition, we suggest a number of steps that archival association webmasters can take to optimize searches of their sites and improve accessibility for every type of user.

Finally, the report points to the need to **create a single collection of basic information resources and tools for those who are new to the field or who may be trying to establish an archival program.** This may emerge from the "Basics of Archives" project now underway through a collaboration involving the state archives of New York, Ohio, and Michigan, as well as AASLH. COSHRC is also encouraged to discuss what resources can and should be made available to community-based organizations and allied professions through their SHRABs.

Follow-up Activities

The report and its recommendations will be transmitted to all of the archival associations in the U.S., associations in closely allied fields, SHRABs, the National Archives and Records Administration, and to grant funding agencies that support archival projects. Members of the project's Working Group, with assistance from COSHRC staff, will facilitate a number of focus groups in 2002 and 2003 to discuss the report's findings and the implementation of its recommendations. SAA will create an Archival Association Leadership Listserv in the fall of 2002, to be managed by COSHRC staff initially, to provide a ready mechanism for communication among all of these associations. *(cont. page 6)*

MHS HIRES NEW ARCHIVIST

During the August 2002 budget cuts to state government agencies, the Montana Historical Society Archives lost ¾ of a position. In late August the Archives filled the remaining ¼ position. Rich Aarstad, who is also the Society's Lewis and Clark Librarian, was hired to fill the Archives' vacancy. He can be reached at 444-4775 or raarstad@state.mt.us.

NFACE REPORT ISSUED

The Council of State Historical Records Coordinators (COSHRC), in partnership with the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), undertook a project to organize and present a National Forum on Archival Continuing Education (NFACE). COSHRC and AASLH received funds from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) in November 1998 to support planning for the Forum. The NFACE Program Committee first met in April 1999 to discuss the specific project components, work plan, participants, agenda, and expected outcomes.

NFACE was held in April 2000 in Decatur, Georgia, as a response to a profession-wide call for attention to continuing education. The Forum's 120 participants included representatives from more than 45 organizations that currently provide continuing education to those caring for historical records or whose constituents are potential consumers of such services. Forty-three State Coordinators were among the participants.

Goals of the forum included informing the organizations about what information resources were already available; encourage collaboration and coordination among providers in developing offerings that addressed gaps in existing education opportunities; improve accessibility to information resources about best practices in the care of historical records; and develop an action agenda for archival continuing education in the next decade.

Copies of this report are available on the Council of State Historical Records Coordinators website at www.coshrc.org/reports/nface or by contacting the Montana SHRAB.

SHRAB MEETING *(cont.)*

State Coordinator. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The next item discussed was whether the SHRAB should organize an event for Archives Week 2003, which will be the first week of October. Board members discussed printing a poster, having the Governor make a proclamation for Archives Week, co-sponsoring a workshop coordinated with the printing of "So you have a box of records…," and having two workshops—one on each end of the state. The board decided to pursue the idea of sponsoring a workshop based on the "So you have a box of records…" brochure. The workshop will be held in two locations, one being a tribal college, on opposite ends of the state. Molly will look into the possibility of printing a poster.

The Board then revisited the idea of writing a re-grant project to be submitted to NHPRC. The board discussed reducing the amount of funding that would be re-granted to small archives. Members suggested that grant funding should be flexible and be available for capital improvements like roofs, heating systems; training; or supplies and shelves. The board suggested developing a two-phase grant project. The first phase would consist of conducting a needs assessment of archives in Montana. The second phase would consist of re-grants to institutions, with criteria based on information gathered through the needs assessment. Molly will follow up on this lead and will search for potential funding sources.

Finally, the Board discussed the need to provide some information on how to close a museum for the winter—for the building, collections, blocking windows, taking down photos, and moving items. This information will be included in future versions of the self-assessment manual.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 13	Local Gov't Records Committee meeting, Bozeman
Nov. 14-15	Big Sky Chapter of ARMA Conf., Bozeman

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NEW BRAND RECORDS AT MHS

"Brands are the classical language of the American West, just as Latin and Greek are the languages of old Mediterranean civilizations," said Montana author Ivan Doig. Doig and his wife, Carol, recently contributed funds allowing Montana brands dating back to 1873 to be placed on microfilm by the Montana Historical Society.

"We assist many Montanans in researching their genealogy, and of course brands owned in past generations are a great part of that heritage," said MHS Director Arnold Olsen. The project is currently in the process of being microfilmed with brands through the 1950s completed.

Throughout history, brands have been used to identify property and livestock. The first Montana Territorial Legislature in 1865 passed laws providing for the registration of marks and brands to take place on a county level. It soon became apparent that the same brand could be recorded in different counties, and the 1872 Legislature made the recording of brands part of the duties of the Clerk of the Supreme Court.

Author Ivan Doig has his own history with brands, growing up through generations of ranch hands in Montana. "Brands are historically artistic and expressive," said Doig. "It is important that we understand and pass on the classical language of brands." His interest in ranching is evident in his books highlighting his younger years as a ranch hand in the Rocky Mountain Front.

Doig and his wife appreciated being able to contribute to a project that will continue to make pieces of history available for the people of Montana. "Hopefully, this will encourage others to also contribute financially for projects that preserve our history and benefit so many," Doig said.

The Montana Historical Society is located at 225 N. Roberts in Helena, across from the State Capitol and the Department of Livestock. Library and Archives hours at MHS are 9am-12pm and 1pm to 5pm, Monday through Friday, and 9am to 1pm on Saturday.

WEB NEEDS *(cont.)*

Additional Information

Copies of the report and related materials are available on the COSHRC we site at www.coshrc.org. Comments on the report are welcome and should be addressed to Vicki Walch, COSHRC Project Coordinator, vwalch@coshrc.org